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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 2 October 1992, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Afghanistan)
(Vice-President)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [111] (continued)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Sylla (Guinea)
Mr. Fonseca (Cape Verde)
Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam (Viet Nam)
Mr. Diria (United Republic of Tanzania)
Mr. Matthews (Liberia)
Mr. Bragança (Sao Tome and Principe)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 111 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/47/442/Add.4)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to document A/47/442/Add.4, which has been circulated in the General Assembly Hall this afternoon. It contains a letter addressed to the President of the General Assembly by the Secretary-General informing him that since the issuance of his communications dated 15, 18, 22 and 24 September 1992 Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SYLLA (Guinea) (interpretation from French): Exactly 34 years ago today Guinea attained independence. On this anniversary I am very happy to convey to you, Sir, the warm greetings of the people of Guinea, its Government and its President, General Lansana Conté.

Beyond its being simply a matter of tradition, I find it a very pleasant duty to congratulate the President on his election. I am convinced that our work will produce tangible results, thanks to his personal experience and the international prestige of his country.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

I also wish to express to our President's predecessor, Mr. Samir Shihabi of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with whom my delegation had the good fortune to cooperate within the Bureau of the forty-sixth session, our appreciation for the competence and dedication with which he conducted the work of that session.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar also earned the high esteem of my Government for having marked his two consecutive terms of office with effectiveness and consensus.

Similarly, I pay tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, for his dynamism and the many initiatives he has taken since assuming office. His report "An Agenda for Peace" is a source of valuable inspiration in the maintenance and strengthening of international peace. The preventive diplomacy he advocates in it should have the support of the international community.

The Guinean Government warmly welcomes the admission of new Member States, confirming once again the universality of our Organization's principles.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

Many events have occurred since our last session. Mankind is living through an age of hope, but also one of uncertainty.

True, many promises are being made, but there does not appear to be a sufficient awareness of dangers. Indeed, the new world architecture is taking shape against a backdrop of persistent poverty and misery in the South, in contrast to the general well-being in the North.

The international landscape still contains dark zones of actual and potential conflict. The transition towards the emerging order is creating for the countries of Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America problems whose solution will require sacrifice, farsightedness and solidarity from the international community.

Along with the political stakes, which are of crucial importance, there are no-less-important economic and social challenges. Clearly, poverty is undermining the fabric of States, creating profound imbalances in the developing countries and threatening the very foundation of human rights. And the first human right, the one on which all the others depend, is the right to development.

Nor can there be development without a guarantee of sources of income derived from basic commodities, prices for which, unfortunately, are not within the control of developing countries. This disturbing situation represents a real threat to the North as well, for it is already one of the causes of the strong wave of migration from the South in search of prosperity.

This is compounded by the external indebtedness of the third world countries. Payments for debt servicing, which increase exponentially, are in the final analysis an unbearable burden on economies already severely tried by the imbalances in the world economic order and by natural disasters.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

Many solutions have been advanced, but the international community must finally give priority to the growth and development of the poor countries - must, in other words, build on the ruins of the old East-West order a new order based on more dynamic and more innovative North-South relations. Such a system could take into account, inter alia, free access for export products from the South to markets in the North and a growth in public aid to development and investments.

It has been recognized that improving the situation in Africa necessarily involves economic reforms, the sound management of public affairs and popular participation in development. In this connection, most of the countries of Africa have undertaken deep political, economic and social reforms. But the efforts undertaken on the national, subregional and regional levels have not, unfortunately, enjoyed the expected international support. The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, which gave rise to so much hope, has not produced the desired results. Capital flows from North to South have been negative in relation to the flow of resources from South to North.

Nevertheless, my delegation welcomes the adoption by the United Nations of the New Agenda for African Development in the 1990s, which will, I hope, enhance the impact of United Nations action in the economic and social development of the continent.

For Africa, one thing is clear: recovery and the diversification of economic activities require subregional and regional integration. In this connection, the establishment of the African Ecoromic Community will enable the continent to benefit from the complementarity of its human, natural and financial resources and offer at the same time the best opportunities to take advantage of major international markets.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

I must stress that Africa is determined to fulfil its part of the contract in order to meet all the development targets set forth within the framework of the Community. To that end, it needs the constant support of the international community.

Another of our concerns is the situation in South Africa, which has been included in our agenda for 46 years. While the international community was attempting to derive satisfaction from some of the progress achieved in negotiations, the events at Biopatong, along with the deliberate massacres at Ciskei on 7 September 1992, have strengthened our belief that the end of apartheid was proclaimed much too prematurely.

My delegation believes that the South african Government must put an end to the escalation of violence, free political prisoners and rescind the Homelands Law and other discriminatory laws. Similarly, our country appreciates the recommendations made by the Secretary-General's Special Representative and also welcomes the sending of United Nations observers to assist in strengthening the structures established by the peace agreement. Negotiation is the only viable solution. The international community must encourage the resumption of the talks within the purview of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa.

The situation in many other African countries continues to concern us. I am thinking first of Liberia, a fraternal country and neighbour battered by destructive internal war. At any early stage the countries of West Africa members of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) united in solidarity to seek a negotiated settlement. A peace plan was drawn up with the constant participation of all the parties to the conflict. The recent summit meeting of ECOWAS Heads of State, at Dakar, took new steps to make

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

the peace plan fully effective. My Government appeals to the world Organization, and especially to the Security Council, to give unreserved support to the implementation of that plan.

In addition, hundreds of millions of individuals have fled Liberia to seek refuge in Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. In Guinea alone there are nearly 600,000 refugees, two thirds of whom are children. The suffering endured by these human beings calls for additional efforts within the framework of the greatly appreciated assistance of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

What can we say about Somalia, now in flames and so sorely tried by famine and drought? My Government believes that peace can return to that country only if all the fighting factions display political will and agree to dialogue. Only the establishment of an immediate and definite cease-fire will enable the Somalians to engage in serious negotiations on the future of their country. Indeed, there is no point in turning to international forums for some futile recognition or confirmation. Our brothers in Somalia must agree to bury the hatchet of war and allow the international community to help them to help themselves.

In addition to the political stakes, the tragedy in Somalia raises thorny humanitarian problems, for whose solution emergency measures have been effectively implemented through the joint efforts of the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity and many countries and non-governmental organizations.

As for Angola, the cessation of hostilities and the dialogue opened between the parties to the conflict have made it possible to hold pluralistic elections.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

Not far away, in Mozambique, the Rome peace negotiations and the recent agreement reached in Botswana between RENAMO and the Maputo Government represent a decisive step towards settling that long and painful conflict.

The crisis in Rwanda is the subject of joint discussions to restore stability and security among the countries of the subregion. Direct negotiations between the Government and the Rwanda Patriotic Front have emitted a glimmer of hope that an end may be put to a deadly conflict and that the bases of national unity may be strengthened.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

For many years, the crisis in the Middle East has occupied an important place in our discussions here in the Organization; it is still one of the greatest threats to international peace and security. The Palestinian question is at the heart of this formidable crisis. Only the return of all their rights to the Palestinian people under the auspices of the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole and legitimate representative, can lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting solution. The Government of Guinea urges the parties to pursue the peace negotiations. By the same token, we support any other initiative directed towards breaking the log-jam in this situation quickly.

With regard to Cambodia, the establishment of a Supreme National Council in Cambodia headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk is putting an end to a very difficult war and heralds the dawn of a new period which will, we hope, be characterized by a climate of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Despite the efforts of the international community, engagements of a rare violence are tearing apart the republics of the former Yugoslavia. Every day the peoples of these lands are seeing their historic legacy, which it took them centuries to build, reduced to ruins.

International pressure must continue to be brought to bear in order to assert international legality and human rights and to ensure they are respected. We welcome the peace efforts of the London Conference and the recent summit conference of the non-aligned countries.

With regard to the question of Korea, my delegation supports the reunification process on the peninsula, from which nuclear weapons should be precluded. My Government appreciates all the efforts towards reconciliation, non-aggression, exchanges and cooperation between the two Koreas with a view to their peaceful reunification.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

The spectacular and most often rapid transformations taking place in the world today should have beneficial effects for disarmament and arms control. Even if on the bilateral level we are seeing agreements with regard to reducing or destroying certain types of weapons, at the multilateral level negotiations are marking time.

The disappearance of the bipolar world is tending to make the senseless arms race incomprehensible. However, in this new context, the risk of war has not yet been ruled out, because of the existence of arsenals of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. This is why the Republic of Guinea will continue to appeal urgently for general and complete disarmament.

My delegation welcomes the appreciable results achieved in the negotiations on the signing of a convention on chemical weapons. However, the principal issues that are the cornerstone of disarmament, namely, the prohibition of nuclear tests and the arms race and the prevention of a nuclear war, have not experienced the same positive development.

Moreover, the close interconnection established in 1987 by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development is still just as important: a reduction in military expenditures and budgets could boost economic and industrial activity in the have-not countries while strengthening the economic and social development efforts of developing countries.

In recent years, relations between States have expanded and diversified. Multilateralism is strengthened as a result. The large number of States Members of the universal Organization increasingly reflects their desire to engage in integrated and coordinated action at the international level in order to take up the various challenges: the challenge of peace, the

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

challenge of economic and social development and the challenge of the environment.

Here is where multilateral relations must play an important role in mapping out the new order, which mankind hopes will be democratic and will generate prosperity for all. This is the path of multilateralism that the non-aligned countries recently embarked upon in Djakarta. Our Organization should take this duly into account in future international relations.

The United Nations is in the process of carrying out positive work on various fronts; this is work which gives it undeniable authority, particularly in the area of the settlement of conflicts. Never before has there been such a strong consensus regarding the profound significance of peace.

The aspiration of peoples to justice, security and greater prosperity has everywhere initiated an enormous process of social transformation, which is perceived as the obvious sign of democratic change. In the Republic of Guinea, the democratic transition is taking place peacefully. The constitutional institutions, governed by the principle of the separation of powers, are being established. Some 40 parties are engaged in the quest for political power. A supreme court, in which is invested the judicial power, will ensure that elections take place in a regular way. The legislative elections are scheduled for December 1992, followed immediately by presidential elections in 1993.

The Government is pursuing a coherent policy of transition on the basis of dialogue and transparency. In any case, the form of democracy must be adjusted to suit the historical, economic, social and cultural realities of each country.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

The Government of Guinea, resolutely committed to building a State of law, supports the actions of the international community to promote and develop human rights. In this respect, Guinea welcomes the convening of the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 and the international conference on the African child scheduled for November 1992 in Dakar. Here I wish to appeal urgently to the international community as a whole, and particular to the donors, to finance the various national programmes of action prepared in the context of the decade for children.

Two important international events are to be commemorated in a few days' time by this Assembly, which will devote plenary meetings to them: the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing. My Government, which is always sensitive to the fate of these two social categories and their sufferings, is devoting a major part of its efforts under its national development programmes to them, and endorses the measures adopted as part of the Decade of Disabled Persons as well as those taken under the International Plan of Action on Ageing.

For development strategies and programmes to be viable, they must pay particular attention to the problem of the environment. That is why my delegation requests the countries of the North to participate fully in financing Agenda 21, as defined and adopted in Rio, for the protection of the environment and lasting development.

Another major source of concern is the production and consumption of drugs and the illicit traffic in them. To get rid of this scourge once and for all, police pressure, the destruction of plantations and the prohibition of money laundering must be backed up with the parallel development and promotion of substitute crops.

(Mr. Sylla, Guinea)

The revitalization of the United Nations system is now a categorical imperative. This revitalization should in particular include enlarging the Security Council with a view to ensuring that a larger number of countries participate as permanent members. That reform could also make that vital body, responsible as it is for maintaining international peace and security, more efficient and effective. Expanding the Council is, in our opinion, one of the fundamental aspects of the democratization of international relations that is now needed.

The Government of the Republic of Guinea attaches the utmost importance to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations and to respect for the principles of its Charter, which is a prerequisite for the advent of a new order based on justice for all and on peace, prosperity and international solidarity.

Mr. FONSECA (Cape Verde) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): I should like to begin by congratulating Mr. Stoyan Ganev on his election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am certain that under his guidance this session will prove to be a very fruitful one.

To your predecessor, Mr. Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the manner in which he conducted the work of the forty-sixth session and for his personal efforts to strengthen the role of the General Assembly.

The election of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, is of particular satisfaction to Cape Verde. I am certain that, under his leadership, the Organization will be able to face its responsibilities at a moment when fundamental changes are taking place in the world arena towards a more just order and the aspirations of mankind.

I welcome the 13 new Members of the Organization recently admitted and am certain that their admission will enrich our collective dialogue in the search for solutions to the international problems that affect us all. The principle of universality of the United Nations has thus gained more expression.

I hope that countries still under foreign occupation will, in the not-too-distant future, also join the community of nations represented here. Among the countries still under colonial occupation is East Timor. Historical and cultural ties link us with the people of that Territory under foreign occupation.

My country sincerely hopes the ongoing negotiations between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General, as mandated by the General Assembly, will produce positive results which will make it possible in

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

the near future for the people of East Timor to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination.

The Assembly welcomed with enthusiasm the end of the cold war which put an end to the spectre of a nuclear holocaust and the policies of bloc rivalry. Cape Verde, together with many other countries, has great hopes for the new era announced by the end of the cold war. We hope that this new era will be dominated by peace in the world, cooperation among countries, global respect for human rights and democratic values and by renewed efforts in the field of economic development.

If, on the one hand, the end of the cold war has given rise to an international political environment of great optimism concerning our collective future, it has, on the other, allowed conflicts to come into the open, the negative effects of which are of great concern to us all consuming, as they do, energies and resources so necessary to the economic and social development of countries - a prerequisite for peoples to attain their aspirations for progress and well-being.

The redefinition of the political geography and the newly institutionalized democracies in Eastern Europe are, without doubt, a political event of major magnitude, the positive effects of which on the international scene are already being felt. Nevertheless, the open conflicts which seem to proliferate in that part of the world give rise to serious concern about their negative impact on regional and global stability.

Similarly, the political movements towards the creation of democratic governments in many parts of the world, mainly in Africa, while anticipating the emergence of a new order in the existence of nations based upon democratic pluralism, the participation of populations in running their countries and the

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

affirmation of and respect for the fundamental rights of the citizenry, are also sometimes accompanied by internal political convulsions and conflicts.

Thus present international relations are dominated by the optimism and hopes for a better future for us all brought about by these changes and, at the same time, by the current political realities where armed confrontations seem to take hold.

The tragic situation in Somalia is a blatant example of the many national conflicts that are ravaging the world.

I believe that national conflicts such as the one in Somalia, deserve our full attention, bearing in mind the dimension of the loss of human lives, the destruction of property they entail and the repercussions they have on regional and international peace and stability.

The United Nations should assist those affected countries in the humanitarian field as well as in helping them to regain their internal political harmony and to bring about a normalization of the situation.

I hope that in the case of Somalia all political forces will extend their full cooperation to the United Nations in facilitating the distribution of humanitarian assistance to the affected population. My country condemns any resistance or opposition to the deployment of United Nations forces in Somalia, whose presence becomes necessary for the massive provision of humanitarian assistance. I hope that the United Nations will proceed to the early deployment of an additional 3,000 United Nations guards to Somalia in view of the urgency of the situation. What is at stake here is the survival of the population of Somalia. Each day that passes without humanitarian assistance represents the loss of innumerable lives. The United Nations should stand firm in the implementation of its deployment decision, even in the face of the opposition of certain factions.

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an example of the unfortunate reality that we are witnessing today, in which many conflicts seem to take hold despite attempts at peaceful negotiation. Notwithstanding the enormous efforts already made in various bodies, including the Security Council, to put an end to the conflict that is raging in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and that has affected in particular the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no tangible and lasting result has been achieved so far.

For reasons having to do with peace and political stability in a region as important for international security as Europe, and also with the respect that the humanitarian situation deserves from all of us, the international community should make renewed efforts to bring about peace and normality in that country.

In this context, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) can and should play a positive role. Everyone should strictly abide by the principle of territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The internal conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires a solution involving respect for the equal rights of all its citizens. The basis of that solution should be satisfaction of the legitimate aspirations of the country's different communities.

Against this background, my country hopes that the ongoing peace conference co-sponsored by the United Nations and the European Economic Community will produce satisfactory results in the very near future.

The armed confrontations that today seem to be occurring everywhere call for a strong and more effective United Nations handling of its responsibilities in the maintenance of peace and stability. This important role of the United Nations takes on particular importance as an indispensable

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

guarantee of the preservation of the independence, territorial integrity and security of smaller nations.

It is incumbent upon the Security Council to carry out this primary responsibility of the United Nations in a speedy, efficient, coherent, impartial and unequivocal manner, whoever the participants in a conflict might be and wherever it might take place.

In this connection, I should like to emphasize the relevance of the proposals put forward by the Secretary-General in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), with a view to strengthening the United Nations intervention capacity in the prevention and management of international crises. These proposals deserve careful consideration. My delegation will make its contribution to their analysis in the appropriate forum. The seriousness of the issues of international peace and security require careful consideration of these proposals, with a view to their early implementation.

The Assembly should exert every effort to make the affirmation of and respect for human rights in all their different dimensions a priority issue on its agenda. The repeated violation of fundamental rights in various countries is still a reality that the community of nations cannot tolerate. Every effort should be made to eliminate the abuses that are still being committed in various parts of the world against the dignity of human beings and their basic human rights.

While recognizing the multifaceted dimension of human rights, my delegation does not share the functionalist approach to this question. Indeed, fundamental rights and individual liberties are fundamental to the dignity of human beings and should therefore be asserted unconditionally. It is in this context that my country has advocated strengthening and improving

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

United Nations mechanisms for the protection of human rights whenever their violation, by its dimension and degree, becomes intolerable.

Whenever United Nations action to protect human rights comes into conflict with the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, we should face the issue with the necessary courage and imagination to find a middle-ground approach.

I should like in this connection to emphasize my country's concern about the practices of xenophobia and racism in certain countries. Cape Verde takes pride in receiving foreigners in its midst. It is therefore difficult for us to understand the surge of hatred and violence against foreign nationals and migrant workers in certain countries.

A large part of my country's population works and resides abroad. Migration is today a universal phenomenon that in a way involves all countries. It is the expression of solidarity among groups and their ability to live in peace with one another, irrespective of their origin or race. Firm measures should be taken in the receiving countries against those engaged in such shameful practices, for they run counter to the basic rules of the civilized world that we all wish to build.

The economic situation of the developing countries has not improved, notwithstanding national efforts. The precarious economic situation in which these countries find themselves plays a negative role in the establishment and consolidation of democratic institutions and offers fertile ground for the resurgence of conflict, which not only poisons social harmony, but also disturbs the peace and security of States.

In the past, responding to appeals for economic assistance for developing nations could be seen as the expression of a mere act of human solidarity, but

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

today it is clear that the need to engage all countries, developed and developing, in addressing the problems of underdevelopment represents a global interest that we all have in the creation of objective conditions that will facilitate the internal stability of nations and their harmonious relationship.

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

The problem of underdevelopment is thus today a global concern shared by all those interested in the stability and ecological balance of the world. Therefore the solution of this problem should be found by both developed and developing countries, together.

This economic situation becomes even more fragile for the developing countries that are affected by drought and desertification. Africa is the continent most affected in this regard. The enormous dimensions that drought and desertification has assumed in the world and the catastrophic effects it has had on many developing countries and the well-being of their population requires a global plan to face this calamity successfully.

In this regard, it is to be hoped that the decision of the Rio Conference to establish an inter-governmental committee to negotiate a convention on drought and desertification will be implemented in the course of this session of the General Assembly.

As a country that is seriously affected by drought and desertification, Cape Verde expects the negotiation of such a legal instrument to be crowned with success and its early entry into force to be a landmark in the struggle against this serious problem.

Similarly, it is hoped that the important decisions taken at the Rio Conference will have positive follow-up.

The time has come for us to show with deeds that this Conference represented a break with a past of environmental negligence. Let us hope that it will represent the beginning of a new attitude on the part of Governments and a new spirit of shared responsibilities and international solidarity in the creation of a healthier and ecologically more sound world, a world economically more interdependent and morally more just.

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

The world goes through political, economic and social changes of major magnitude. The United Nations, as a permanent conference where economic, political and social issues are discussed, should reflect such changes in its own structures and procedures so that it may fulfil its potential and strengthen its capacity in dealing with the ever increasing and diversified challenges.

In this regard the efforts being made to streamline the work of the United Nations and rationalize its activities are undoubtedly commendable and deserve our support. The "Agenda for peace" presented by the Secretary-General following the Security Council summit held in January of this year is a solid basis for reflection on issues related to United Nations reform. It is to be hoped that the useful ideas contained therein will be further developed in the ongoing dialogue on the adjustment of the United Nations to today's needs.

This necessity for adjustment is already felt even at the level of certain United Nations organs. In fact, the activity of the General Assembly has been seen lately as having lost certain importance, and its prestige has been affected.

As the most important organ of the United Nations, where the voices of all member countries are heard, it is important that this Assembly, which is the expression of the democratic character of this Organization, find ways to reactivate its activities and restore its lost prestige.

In our view there are different means through which to strengthen the role of the General Assembly. The consideration of measures to rationalize the work of the General Assembly is one such means. Rationalization should touch upon redesigning its agenda and reconsideration of its procedures,

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

including restructuring the debate in the plenary and in the different committees, to avoid unnecessary overlapping and repetition.

On the other hand, it is important that whenever an item on its agenda assumes global relevance and generates universal interest it should be considered in the General Assembly itself instead of being transferred for consideration as autonomous subject-matter in an international conference.

Lately voices have frequently been heard on the need to enlarge the Security Council membership. We believe that this issue should be tackled in the light of the necessity of adapting this organ to the correlation of forces prevalent in the world today. Equally important is the necessity of taking into consideration a relative balance in the representation in the Council of different regions. Whatever the outcome, however, enlargement of the Security Council should in no way take place at the expense of the effectiveness of the decisions that that important body is called upon to take on issues of peace and security.

On the other hand, the ongoing efforts to streamline the work of the Economic and Social Council should improve the co-ordination of the activities of different bodies dealing with economic and social issues, due account being taken, obviously, of the necessity of preserving the required decentralization and the specific nature of the functions of those bodies. We welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to proceed to an in-depth study on the modalities for that restructuring.

Ours is an era of armed confrontation and profound changes in the international scene. But it is equally an era that offers a unique opportunity and exceptional conditions that nurture great expectations and hope in the shaping of a better and more peaceful relationship between nations aimed at building a collective future of peace and well-being.

(Mr. Fonseca, Cape Verde)

Tolerance, a spirit of solidarity and the promotion of universal values should guide us in the shaping of this collective future. It is incumbent upon us all, small countries and big as well, developed and developing nations, to understand the sense of our community of interest and to take the necessary steps towards that end.

Mr. NGUYEN MANH CAM (Viet Nam) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the delegation of Viet Nam, permit me at the outset to extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. I am sure Mr. Ganev's guidance of this session of the General Assembly will make it a success. We also wish to express our appreciation for the outstanding contribution of His Excellency Mr. Samir S. Shihabi, President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. We should also like to express our great appreciation of the untiring and dynamic efforts of by His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in the noble cause of peace, security and cooperation among nations.

On this occasion I cannot fail to convey warm greetings to the new Members of our great family, the United Nations.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, we have continued to witness profound and far-reaching changes on a global scale. Those changes have led to the disintegration of the international order that came into being after the Second World War and that had existed for nearly half a century. The new world situation opens up new opportunities for - but at the same time presents acute challenges to - the peace, security and prosperity of each nation, as well as that of the international community as a whole. With the threat of annihilation by nuclear war receding and no longer hanging over the peoples of the world like the sword of Damocles, all nations might expect to live in a world of peace, security, justice and prosperity, with egalitarian, mutually beneficial cooperation and the joint application of the miraculous achievements of the modern scientific and technological revolution to the benefit of each country's and the whole world's development and well-being.

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Viet Nam)

Regrettably, the overall picture of today's world is far from being promising. We fully share the view expressed by the leaders of the non-aligned countries in the Jakarta Message of 6 September 1992:

"The world today is still far from being a peaceful, just and secure place. Simmering disputes, violent conflicts, aggression and foreign occupation, interference in the internal affairs of States, policies of hegemony and domination, ethnic strife, religious intolerance, new forms of racism and narrowly conceived nationalism are major and dangerous obstacles to harmonious coexistence among States."

Concurrently with the settlement of some regional conflicts, we have witnessed the outbreak of a series of new conflicts on several continents, even in the heart of Europe, a continent that should have enjoyed peace and stability thanks to the Helsinki mechanism of cooperation and security. In practice, policies of embargo, coercion and diktat are still being pursued by some countries or groups of countries against others, thus hindering the latter's development.

The global economic environment also contains elements of uncertainty. The rate of economic growth has fallen to its lowest level in many years. The symptoms of a new financial crisis, which could shake the international monetary system, can be perceived. Tendencies towards greater protectionism and the deadlock in the Uruguay Round are only worsening the economic situation of many countries, especially the developing countries.

Even more worrisome is the inexorably widening gap between the developed industrial countries and the developing countries. We cannot remain indifferent to the poverty and hunger suffered daily by millions of men and

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam,
Viet Nam)

women across the continents. The famine in many countries, most severe in some African countries like Somalia and the Sudan, is deeply moving and calls for vast emergency assistance from other countries and from international organizations.

In view of the above-mentioned opportunities and challenges, it is imperative for States and nations to step up cooperation to promote their own development and at the same time to join forces in solving global problems and in contributing to the building of a new, sounder and better world order based on truly democratic and egalitarian international relations, mutual respect and reciprocal benefit for the sake of the overall objectives of peace and development.

In this regard, we welcome the initial results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio, especially Agenda 21, aiming at the goal of sustainable development. The immediate question, however, is that of securing the financial and technological resources needed to implement Agenda 21.

The social dimension, including the concern for children, assumes the same long-term significance as regards both sustainable development and the environment. As is shown in the report of the Secretary-General, in the follow-up to the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children, much has been done in the past two years, but our commitment and our action need to be imbued with even greater universality. For its part, Viet Nam was the first country in Asia to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have finalized our national programme of action and have just submitted, within the specified time-frame, our first national report on the implementation of the Convention.

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Viet Nam)

Against the backdrop of the evolving international situation, Asia and the Pacific reflect fairly clearly the characteristics of today's world. While several nations have seized opportunities to achieve rapid development, not a small number of others remain mired in a state of underdevelopment, deprivation and poverty. Alongside the trend towards cooperation, some seeds of potential conflicts are being sown.

We are pleased to note that South-East Asia is now entering a new stage with fine prospects for peace and prosperity. The erstwhile complicated bilateral relations have been and are being normalized and the trend towards regional cooperation and integration, in order to achieve stability and development, is gaining great momentum. Relations of good-neighbourliness, mutual trust and understanding are gradually being established in the region. These are indeed historic developments in the international relations of South-East Asia, which had been a constant hotbed of war and tension for the past half century. However, as in many other areas in the world, there remain latent factors of destabilization, factors that are a legacy of the past or arise from recent events, especially those relating to territorial borders either on the land or on the sea, between the countries of South-East Asia and those near to them. This is a cause of concern for countries within and outside the region because of the danger of destabilization in that important part of the world.

It is our view that global security is indivisible. This is true at the global as well as the regional level. Security can be achieved in South-East Asia only when security is assured for each country in the region, it being

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Viet Nam)

understood that such security is multifaceted: military, political and economic. To that end, various positive initiatives and proposals have been put forward by countries in the region, such as the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in South-East Asia (ZOPFAN), the Free Trade Area (AFTA) of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Manila Declaration of 22 July 1992, Malaysia's East Asian Economic Grouping (EAEG), Indonesia's Forum on Cooperation in the Eastern (South China) Sea, and the seven principles governing relations among the countries of South-East Asia set forth by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. These proposals and initiatives have contributed, and are still contributing, to a large extent to the strengthening of mutual trust and understanding among nations in the region, thus fostering further regional cooperation.

With regard to the problems that emerged recently over the Eastern Sea, it is our view that they should be solved appropriately through peaceful negotiations, without resort to force or the threat of force - that is, on the basis of fundamental principles acceptable to all the parties concerned; otherwise, the situation may take a negative and complex turn.

For Viet Nam's part, while firmly resolved to defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity, we advocate the settlement of all disputes through dialogue between the parties concerned, so as to achieve an appropriate solution together. Pending such a solution, Viet Nam will exercise the utmost restraint and refrain from any action that might adversely affect efforts towards confidence-building and the relaxation of tension in the relations among countries of the region, and hopes that other parties concerned will do the same. We are convinced that with good will on the part of all parties

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Viet Nam)

concerned, an appropriate solution can be found to any dispute, no matter how complex it may be. In this spirit, we reiterate our full support for the four principles put forward in the ASEAN Declaration of 22 July 1992 to serve as a basis for the settlement of disputes and to ensure security in the Eastern Sea. These principles are as follows: First, all sovereignty and jurisdictional issues pertaining to the Eastern (South China) Sea shall be resolved by peaceful means, without resort to force; secondly, all parties concerned shall exercise restraint with a view to creating a positive climate for the eventual resolution of all disputes; thirdly, the possibilities of cooperation in the Eastern Sea shall be explored without prejudicing the sovereignty and jurisdiction of countries having direct interests in the area; and, fourthly, the principles contained in the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in South-East Asia shall be applied as the basis for establishing a code of international conduct over the Eastern Sea.

Fruitful discussions in a spirit of constructive cooperation, based on equality and mutual respect between Viet Nam and, respectively, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, on questions relating to the Eastern Sea, have proved to be the best way to settle problems in relations among countries of the region.

The countries of the region and the international community support the implementation of the Paris Agreements on Cambodia, with a view to building a peaceful, independent and neutral Cambodia, living in national harmony, enjoying friendly relations with all countries and contributing to regional peace and stability. However, we share the international community's concern that the implementation of the Paris Agreements is being impeded and we call

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Viet Nam)

upon all the parties concerned to cooperate in order to ensure the strict and full implementation of these Agreements. For its part, as a signatory to the Paris Agreements, Viet Nam reaffirms its strict observance and full implementation of the provisions concerning Viet Nam, as stipulated by the Agreements. At the same time, Viet Nam denounces the acts of ostracism and persecution against Vietnamese residents in Cambodia and categorically rejects the slanderous allegations against Viet Nam by those whose only aim is to cover up their activities which undermine the Paris Agreements.

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Viet Nam)

The internationalization of the world economy and the trend towards economic restructuring require reform and resolute participation of national economies, including that of Viet Nam, in the international division of labour, economic cooperation and world trade. Over the last 5 years, thanks to the judicious policy pursued and the exceptional efforts exerted by the Vietnamese people, the cause of reform and renewal in Vietnam has effectively become part of everyday life and brought about initial but very significant achievements in all spheres of social life. The energies of all economic sectors in our country have been released and multiplied. Together with the expansion of cooperation with the outside world, such developments have brought about visible changes in the economic and social make-up of the country which is thus poised to forge ahead.

Life however always poses new demands. While carrying out the task of economic reform as the centrepiece of our efforts we are at the same time stepping up political reform and renewal. These are the two facets of one single process which interact and stimulate each other. The political reform is aimed at extending the democratic freedoms of our citizens in all respects, restructuring the political system and building a State governed by the rule of law, truly of the people, by the people and for the people. Our new Consititution, promulgated in April this year, is not only a concrete embodiment but also the institutionalization of this reform process. One of the essential elements of this new Constitution is to ensure strict respect for the fundamental rights of the citizen. Proceeding from the great principles enshrined in Viet Nam's 1945 Declaration of Independence, whereby "all peoples of the world are born equal; every nation is entitled to the

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam,
Viet Nam)

same rights to life, happiness and freedom", we hold the view that each State and each nation strives for the ideal of democracy and freedom in its own way, creatively rather than through a stereotyped or dogmatic approach, and still less through the adoption of models imposed from outside. Each nation is entitled to the sacred right freely to choose its own socio-political system, to chart its own path of development and to tackle its own problems in accordance with its historical, cultural and social traditions. It is unacceptable for one nation to impose standards of democracy and human rights upon another nation, and it is all the more unacceptable for one nation to stand as judge over another nation.

Carrying out its foreign policy of broad openness, diversification and greater multilateral emphasis in its international relations, during recent times Viet Nam has strengthened and expanded its relations with many countries in the world on the bases of mutual respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, of non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and of equality and mutual benefit. We attach special importance to improving and strengthening relations of friendship and cooperation with countries in our region and to making a positive contribution towards a South-East Asia of peace, stability, cooperation and development. Relations between Viet Nam and the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have entered a completely new phase. Our country's accession to the Treaty on Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia, signed at Bali in 1976, and its becoming an observer in ASEAN constitute the foundation for a qualitatively new development of the relations of friendship and cooperation between Viet Nam and the ASEAN countries. Relations between Viet Nam and China have been normalized on the basis of the five principles of

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam, Viet Nam)

peaceful coexistence, in keeping with the aspiration and interests of the two peoples and with the trend towards peace, stability and development in the region. We believe that these fundamental interests will help the two countries settle in a satisfactory manner and through peaceful negotiations outstanding as well as newly emerging problems in their relations on the basis of respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and legitimate interests.

Our foreign policy is geared to combining continuity and dynamism in our relations with all countries, large and small. We are doing our utmost to consolidate and renew traditional relations with friendly countries and with countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and we continue to extend solidarity and support to the cause of the Palestinian and South African peoples and to all other peoples struggling for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress. We continue to strengthen existing relations with countries in various continents and at the same time enter into relations with countries in regions with which we have had only rare contacts in the past, such as recently with countries in the South Pacific, the Gulf and Latin America.

The normalization of relations between Viet Nam and the United States will benefit not only the Vietnamese and the American peoples but also peace and stability in South East Asia. We have turned the page on past history and look forward to the future. Proceeding from this spirit and from our humanitarian policy, we have done whatever possible in cooperating effectively with the United States to settle the question of Americans missing in action during the Viet Nam war. Our constructive efforts and goodwill have been welcomed by the American public and acknowledged by the United States Administration.

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam,
Viet Nam)

We are of the view that today multilateralism, especially as embodied by the United Nations, occupies an increasingly significant position. However, we should define the appropriate degree of separation and correlation between the multilateral dimension and the national dimension. It should be emphasized that isolationism is outmoded but national sovereignty forever remains a sacred value, which all countries, large and small, are determined to defend.

World developments over the past year have rendered ever more imperative the demand for the democratization of international life and inter-State relations, including the democratization of multilateral forums, especially the United Nations. In the new context, the composition of the Security Council and the balance between the Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations must reflect the realities of a world which has radically changed as compared with the time when the United Nations was born, and even with only a few years ago.

(Mr. Nguyen Manh Cam,
Viet Nam)

We endorse the idea of re-examining and enlarging the composition of the Security Council, with due attention to developing countries, with a view to fully implementing the principle of equality between all Member States and ensuring that the voice of the majority is duly heard in the process of making decisions on issues of critical importance to the international community. Our world body must be revitalized so that it can really be an effective multilateral tool for keeping and safeguarding peace, contributing to the solution of global issues and especially for building a sounder and more equitable new world order that will be the fruit of our truly common endeavour.

Within its foreign policy of sovereign independence, peace, cooperation and openness, Vietnam will do its best to participate actively in the work of multilateral institutions and forums, thereby to promote further its integration into the international community and the world economy and to contribute to shaping a sound and equitable new world order that really meets the legitimate expectations of the community of nations.

Mr. DIRIA (United Republic of Tanzania): We have come here to renew our faith and confidence in the world Organization. In a way, especially to us in Africa, the United Nations has assumed a unique position. This is the first time since the founding of the United Nations in 1945 that the Organization has a Secretary-General from Africa. The Tanzanian delegation congratulates Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali on his well-deserved election. The United Nations has assumed great significance because this change in the leadership of the United Nations has come at a time when the changes in the international system during the last few years have imposed upon all countries the need to reassess familiar attitudes and policies.

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

I congratulate the President upon his taking office during this period of change. His wealth of experience, skill and commitment are not only a valuable asset to the forty-seventh session, but also speak volubly of the capabilities of his own country, Bulgaria, with which Tanzania enjoys excellent relations. I am confident that he will ably adorn the position, bringing to it prestige and impartiality. His predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, presided over the forty-sixth session with great skill. My delegation joins in the expressions of appreciation addressed to him.

In any human history, there are certain historical conjunctures which distinguish one period from another. The five-year period between 1987 and 1992 will be regarded as an important period in world history. This phase coincided with the ending of the cold war and witnessed the expansion of the boundaries of the international system through the birth of 21 additional States in the period 1991-1992 alone. I am delighted to join the warm welcome extended to the newest Members of our Organization.

The nature of governments has been transformed by increased democratization of their domestic political orders; the structures of power and influence in the world have been altered by the disintegration of the Soviet Union. These developments call for a transformation of the pattern of diplomatic interactions, especially in the United Nations, and the refashioning of the basic structure underlying the international system so that the emerging new order may be based on right rather than might, on justice rather than expediency.

In retrospect, the political landscape of the international system has been profoundly and positively altered in the last five years. Yet it has

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

also opened up new instabilities, more challenges to international peace and security, greater uncertainties - especially for developing countries - and more danger of armed conflicts, as reflected in the killings in Liberia, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. These conflicts pose a grave danger to the very life of human civilization.

The forty-seventh session of the General Assembly is being held at a critical juncture: we are between two worlds - one dead, the other powerless to be born. We are overshadowed by the dangers of unipolarity, economic decadence in the developing countries, ecological dangers in the developed countries, and the persistence of old injustices in Palestine and South Africa.

This diagnosis of the state of the world applies to the contemporary global configuration and to regional scenes alike. In the global setting, a period of deep-seated, intense East-West conflict has ended with the conclusion of the cold war. As a result, an established order has given way to an as yet undefined future. At the regional level, there are equally mixed results. For example, in South Africa, not long ago, the progress made in the last two years in eradicating apartheid all of a sudden appeared to be on the brink of collapse as the apartheid regime not only retrenched, but also perpetuated township violence and refused to concede the major demands of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress and other democratic forces.

Looking at the areas of conflict, it appears as if, all of a sudden, the conclusion of the cold war has given way to a kind of Hobbesian state of nature in which peoples and nations are caught in perpetual conflict and competition over land, resources, food, labour and markets.

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

In the last two years alone, Africa has witnessed several intra-State conflicts which have resulted in heavy human costs, in terms of casualties and dislocations; direct material costs, in terms of property damage; and opportunity costs. Neighbouring States have also paid heavily through their efforts to strengthen their security on common borders, through caring for refugees and through the diversion of their Governments' attention away from developmental efforts to crisis management related to wars, armed conflicts and insecurity.

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

In short, these conflicts have thwarted African efforts towards economic recovery and peaceful transformation to a democratic order. Thus, while encouraging Africa to transform its political and economic systems, the developed nations have a moral and historical duty to assist the continent in pursuing a sustainable development strategy that is people-oriented. Such assistance will ensure that Africa pursues genuine development and rids itself of a major cause of internal conflicts.

In the last year, Tanzania has been host and facilitator to mediation efforts in the conflict in Rwanda. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front have been able to achieve a cease-fire to set the stage for a lasting political solution. Tanzania would like to congratulate them upon this great achievement, and to pay tribute to the Chairman and Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, to neighbouring States and to other countries for their contributions to these efforts.

Angola and Mozambique have endured long periods of internal conflict. As we meet here today, Angola has successfully completed a crucial multi-party general election and Mozambique has recently signed a joint declaration with RENAMO. These developments will determine the peace and security interests of the two countries. Tanzania commends the Governments and peoples of Angola and Mozambique for having taken the path of reconciliation and accommodation.

Unfortunately, the optimism expressed on Angola and Mozambique cannot be extended to the intractable problems of the Middle East. Since the Madrid Conference, several rounds of talks have been held. There have been at least two outstanding obstacles to successful negotiations: Israel's refusal to accept a Palestinian delegation composed of members of the Palestine

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

Liberation Organization, and Jewish refusal to freeze settlements in occupied areas.

There can be no successful mediation in which the Palestinians, as one of the parties, are continuously denied legitimacy. While Tanzania supports all international efforts to resolve the conflict in the Middle East, the mediation process must be based on the presumed equality of the parties to the conflict. Effective mediation must also proceed from a clear consent and valid representation of all the parties to the conflict.

What has been said of regional conflicts can also be stated of the environment. As witnessed at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, humanity now faces one of its most serious sources of insecurity, the ecological ill-health of the planet itself. Asymmetries in non-sustainable development and industrialization, economic development and resource politics are at the heart of the environmental debate.

Tanzania, like most other developing nations, has four major concerns over the environment, namely: environmental space; environmental growth; environmental conditionality; and environmental democracy. To explain these concerns, we have to emphasize that the developed nations must reduce pressure on the environment through corrective action to enable developing countries, including Tanzania, to achieve environmental space for industrialization.

Environmental growth, that is, the provisions of resources to raise living standards, is necessary to eradicate poverty.

Environmental conditionality must, by and large, be eradicated. Without ignoring the relationship between technology and environmental degradation, the present conditionalities on the provision of foreign assistance is a diversion which tends to conceal real issues that hinder development efforts.

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

The developing countries are responsible for only a small part of the pressures on the global environment.

Environmental democracy refers to participation by the developing countries in the decision-making procedures in multilateral institutions involving finance for the environment. Another component of environmental democracy is to ensure that the question of economic development is not subsumed under environmental concerns. Thus, the task for the international community after the historic Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro will be to merge, wisely, environmental policies with socio-economic development.

Tanzania looks to the establishment of a high-level commission on sustainable development under Article 68 of the Charter.

The period from 1987 to 1992 could be regarded as an extraordinary moment, one which has opened up opportunities to confront and surmount the old and new instabilities and challenges to peace and security. Typical of the period of transition in the international system, negotiations, as a peace-making and policy-making instrument, have assumed renewed significance in resolving old and new issues.

Indeed, the debate in the United Nations during the last two sessions of the General Assembly has been dominated by one theme: the unprecedented opportunity created by the end of the cold war to create a new world order. There is no doubt that the end of super-Power rivalry has contributed significantly to the ending of a number of conflicts, including those in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia and Namibia. This historic opportunity has facilitated increased United Nations involvement in peace-keeping and peacemaking activities in many parts of the world.

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

However, a new world order must be based on the linkage between freedom and development, justice, peace, security and democracy within nations and among nations. From time immemorial, philosophers have reminded practitioners of the primacy of human freedom that is possible in society and through society only when structural inequalities and injustices have been eradicated.

Any new world order ought to be based on the greatest good, and in the guarantee of equality and freedom for all. It must be based on the genuine maintenance of peace and security in the broader sense of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-fostering. For one can maintain security without necessarily maintaining peace, as the former may require measures that uphold the status quo, while the latter could require actions aimed at altering the existing situation. While security refers to the absence of direct violence, peace focuses on the absence of the structural violence of institutionalized injustice and inequalities. This approach is a sine qua non for development, democracy and justice, and for peace and security in general.

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

The conception of a new world order must begin with the reforms in the United Nations and emphasize the important role of regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement. The role of the United Nations must be reinterpreted to foster emancipation from underdevelopment, injustice, inequalities and political domination. It must spearhead both democracy and liberty in general, and the economic capacity to enjoy that liberty meaningfully.

I reiterate that the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, must be reformed because it is based on an outmoded concept of international peace and security. The maintenance of peace and security cannot be exclusively focused on traditional peace-keeping or peacemaking, nor can it be left the exclusive domain of the Security Council. There is also an economic, social and moral obligation to the international community as a whole.

The tragic conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia indicate that the traditional United Nations peace-keeping methods have outlived their utility. Where the very survival of humanity is at stake, where the outbreaks and the level of violence reach enormous proportions, threatening the very fabric of human civilization, and where ethnic conflicts might necessitate external intervention and thus threaten international peace and security, the United Nations must be able to act promptly and decisively.

Somalia is a typical example. My delegation calls upon all parties involved in the conflict to exercise restraint, to cooperate in facilitating the distribution of humanitarian assistance and to set up a government of national reconciliation. Tanzania applauds the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

Arab League and individual Governments in providing humanitarian assistance and in searching for a political solution in Somalia.

In January this year the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to study and make recommendations on ways to strengthen and make more efficient the United Nations capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Tanzania commends the Secretary-General on his prompt, comprehensive and thought-provoking response.

Any durable international system must have a sound legal regime, including respect for and compliance with the rule of law at domestic and international levels and a democratic pattern of interaction. It is in this context that the General Assembly's declaration of the United Nations Decade of International Law, from 1990 to 1999, must be supported. This declaration is a clear indication of the concerted efforts of the United Nations in the legal field to advance the search for a new world order. The Secretary-General has underlined this very important point in his recommendation for a much more effective use of the International Court of Justice, including acceptance of the Court's compulsory jurisdiction.

However, an effective global legal regime presupposes the existence of sound economic and political institutions: there is a mutually reinforcing relationship.

The end of the cold war has tended to strengthen international concern over a systematic policy framework for human development, and has provided the opportunity for a greater range of sophisticated analyses and strategies on the question of development. As I have stated previously, a sound new world

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

order based on human freedom is possible only in a reorganized global society where structural inequalities and injustices are systematically eradicated.

Yet the Fourth United Nations Development Decade is beginning from an unpromising base. Global macroeconomic indicators for the last 18 months reveal a bleak picture. World per capita output remained unchanged in 1990, fell by 2 per cent in 1991 and is expected to fall again, by about 1 per cent, in 1992. Developing countries as a whole have for two consecutive years have undergone an unprecedented decline in their per capita incomes. As the Group of 77 has consistently pointed out, economic growth in the South has been countered by inequality in the global monetary, financial and trade systems and by dwindling resource flows, debt burdens, restrictions on the transfer of technology, denial of market access, adverse terms of trade and declines in the prices of the primary commodities that the South produces.

Among the developing countries, the African region was the worst hit. Total African-region output increased by only 1.9 per cent in 1991, compared with 3.2 per cent in 1990, while the non-oil-exporting countries' average rate of growth of combined output fell from 1.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent in 1991. Southern Africa has the added problem of the worst drought in recent memory, which threatens about 100 million people.

The gloomy economic indicators coincide with the post-cold-war development of changes in the domestic policies of many developing countries, including Tanzania. Restructuring is designed to enhance the dynamism of national economies through the provision of economic enterprise and innovation and opening up to the operation of market forces. The soundness and efficacy of the policies aside, many of the domestic reforms also depend on a supportive external environment at regional and global levels on such

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

important issues as debt-servicing burdens, capital flows, market access and commodity prices.

Several conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the global economy, amongst which are, first, that economic divisions and rivalries inevitably produce political conflicts; and, secondly, that there is a lopsided global interdependence of growing inequalities within and between nations, which cannot be resolved through narrow conceptions of power politics.

There can be no genuine democracy where development strategies do not centre on humankind. As the South Commission report aptly defines it, development

> "... is a process which enables human beings to realize their potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment. It is a process which frees people from fear of want and exploitation, and is also a process of growth, a society that is developing - development is people-centred - efforts of the people, by and for the people".

This correct conception of development covers the essential variables of human development, such as putting people at the centre of any development, the correlation between human development and human freedom, advanced levels of economic activity, and equitable domestic and global distributions of income and opportunity. Indeed, questions such as how the disparities between the poor and the rich can be reduced or why global markets fail to meet the needs of the world's poorest focus on the restraining problem of human development.

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

Tanzania has followed with great interest the efforts by the Secretary-General to restructure the United Nations. Tanzania believes that reform and restructuring of the United Nations, involving both the intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat, should foster a more efficient and effective structure without marginalizing the interests of the Member States, and especially the developing countries.

As I stated earlier, the United Nations alone cannot succeed unless it cooperates with regional organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity, which represent the aspirations of developing nations. The roles of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity are not unique to modern third-world or African conditions. The modern State system has historically been characterized by the struggle for human freedom and development. This resolve has emanated from two concurrent historical tendencies: on the one hand, great-Power hegemony and exploitation; and, on the other hand, the opposition of the overwhelming majority of other medium and small States to that exploitation. None of the present changes in the international system has undermined these central features of the 400-year-old State system. The number and identity of hegemonies may change over time, but the existence and nature of the struggle - namely, the demand for the State system to function according to the universality principle and for equality and justice between States - has not changed.

The plight of developing nations underscores the significance of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity in the struggle to bring equality and justice to the affairs of humanity. Tanzania believes that these regional organizations provide the foundation for collective action in

(Mr. Diria, United Republic of Tanzania)

fostering South-South economic cooperation, enhancing the democratization of international relations, and renewing democratic debate and dialogue between nations, especially North-South multilateral negotiations, which are currently at a stalemate.

The end of the cold war should enhance rather than confuse our resolve to build a new world order based on freedom, justice, equality and the development of humanity as a single family. This approach is the one we must take in the present period, when poor States and peoples are becoming poorer and the rich are becoming richer, and must be seen as the real meaning of democracy at national and global levels. Viewed from this perspective, it is intolerable that any section of the same human family should not enjoy basic economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights.

The human family of nations must not only examine the underlying causes of conflicts, injustice and underdevelopment, it must also seek to change social relationships and transform social structures in such a way that a more just, equal and dignified world emerges. That new world order awaits us. That world order beckons to us. It is a world order we must strive to achieve.

Mr. MATTHEWS (Liberia): We ask the President to accept our hearty congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. We pledge to him the fullest support and cooperation of the Liberian delegation as he puts forth his best efforts in guiding the deliberations of the Assembly.

We offer his illustrious predecessor, Ambassador Samir S. Shihabi of Saudi Arabia, our deepest appreciation for the able manner in which he conducted the affairs of the forty-sixth session, and we wish him well in his future endeavours.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

We welcome the advent of Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a distinguished African scholar and diplomat, to the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations. His stewardship of the Organization since the beginning of this year has witnessed the utilization of the finest diplomatic skills, undiminished resolve, and broad vision to address the many challenging problems which now confront the international community. This singular commitment on his part to the cause of global peace and security, social justice and economic prosperity has inspired tremendous confidence that the United Nations will continue to be the appropriate forum for harnessing various ideas which can promote the betterment of mankind.

We also welcome and extend a hand of friendship to the newly admitted Members of the United Nations. We entertain the fervent hope that their participation will contribute to the achievement of its lofty ideals and objectives.

The cessation of the ideological antagonism which characterized the cold-war era aroused great expectations that our global village would be visited by a climate of international peace, tolerance and goodwill whereby our energies could be devoted to grappling with the myriad problems of underdevelopment. Unfortunately, with apocalyptic premonition, there are wars and rumours of war casting grim shadows throughout our one world. In Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in some of the nations emerging from the former Soviet Union, and even in my own country, Liberia, wars are raging, brought about by either nationalistic yearnings, ethnic and religious rivalries, or by sheer greed for wealth and power.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

Although the United Nations does respond, sometimes much too belatedly, to such crises, there is an urgent need for the Organization to employ its moral authority in a more effective and non-selective way at the early stages of conflicts to prevent the human tragedies which so frequently revisit mankind.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

In this connection the Liberian delegation notes with appreciation the comprehensive and insightful report of the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace", in which he outlines specific measures and proposals to enhance, in a more vigorous and non-selective way, greater United Nations involvement in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace enforcement.

Within this context Member States that are better endowed must exercise leadership to ensure that the United Nations becomes ready, willing and able to engage constructively in humanitarian intervention in internal conflicts, consistent with the guiding principles annexed to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and Article 2, paragraph 7, of the United Nations Charter.

At this juncture we would wish to apprise delegations of developments in Liberia and of Liberia's continuing quest for peace.

Since 24 December 1989, when rebel forces effected an incursion into Liberia from a neighbouring country, Africa's oldest republic has been embroiled in a tragic civil strife replete with atrocious mayhem, murder and madness. In a three-way armed struggle for power in which the "enemy" was defined with scarce exactitude, each faction preyed on the civilian population, whose cries for help were heard by a largely indifferent world.

Liberia, a beacon of hope in Africa as a sovereign expression since 1847, a country which welcomed and assimilated into its society thousands of other Africans from neighbouring countries and elsewhere, was rapidly reduced to a land of grief and desolation. This fratricide impelled about 800,000 of our citizens to seek sanctuary in neighbouring countries.

After the disintegration of the Government and the attendant breakdown of civil authority, and in order to avert further bloodshed, the Economic

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

Community of West African States (ECOWAS) undertook a mediatory initiative by advancing a plan that secured the concurrence of all the interested parties. The ECOWAS peace plan required, inter alia, the deployment of a peace-keeping force, the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), as well as the formation of an interim Government of National Unity to include the warring factions, the political parties and the interest groups of the country.

In August 1990 ECOWAS facilitated the convening of a national conference so that Liberians could deliberate on the future of their country, form an interim government and undertake the initial plans for free and fair elections to be conducted under international supervision and monitoring. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), the main rebel faction, led by Mr. Charles Taylor, failed to attend, apparently opting for a military solution that was still vainly expected to arise from what was already a war of attrition.

At the Conference, the delegates worked within the scope of the peace plan that had been accepted by the warring factions as the basis for mediation. It required that none of the leaders of the armed groups would serve as interim President and that the interim President would be a caretaker and not participate in the elections. Accordingly, the Conference reserved for the NPFL leader the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the highest position in the interim government, from which he could still seek the presidency of the country in a free and fair election. The NPFL was also awarded a majority seating in the interim Legislative Assembly. However, this overture failed to induce the NPFL and its leader to find some common ground with other Liberians.

The Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, meeting at an extraordinary summit at Bamako in November 1990. negotiated a cease-fire declaration and

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

urged Liberians to continue the search for peace by holding another national conference at which the NPFL could be present.

ECOWAS convened a second national conference at Monrovia in March 1991, at which an NPFL delegation participated in the negotiation of an arrangement for the governance of the country along the lines of a framework it advanced. The euphoria that attended those preliminary results were short-lived, as the conclusions reached were summarily rejected by the NPFL leader.

A few months thereafter the NPFL alerted some of the leaders of ECOWAS that it was not prepared to participate in an interim government that would, alternatively, be disposed to negotiating, under the auspices of ECOWAS, another proposal of its own. The NPFL proposed a snap election, to be held within six months, to be preceded by the encampment and disarmament of all armed combatants.

ECOWAS established the Committee of Five, headed by His Excellency President Felix Houphouet-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire, to work with Liberians and help us reach an understanding. The negotiations took place in four different meetings, producing an agreement which, because of the venue, has become known as the Yamoussoukro Accord. This Accord has aroused declarations of support from the Organization of African Unity, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations Security Council.

But how has the NPFL reacted to the commitments it undertook? At the fifteenth session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, held at Dakar in July 1992, the 16 West African leaders reached a clear consensus and observed:

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

"The Authority determined that the uncooperative conduct by the NPFL, especially with regard to the encampment and disarmament of the combatants and the insertion of a buffer zone along the Liberia-Sierra Leone border, continued to pose a serious threat to the peace, stability and security of the West African region."

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

The Authority therefore mandated the Field Commander of ECOMOG to complete the implementation of the programme contained in the Yamoussoukro Accord not later than 30 days from the conclusion of the summit meeting. Furthermore, the West African leaders decided:

> "That unless Charles Taylor and the NPFL comply with the implementation of the said programme, the Authority shall impose comprehensive sanctions against Charles Taylor and the NPFL-controlled areas of Liberia and any other party that fails to comply with the implementation of the programme; that all the Member States of ECOWAS shall take all necessary measures to give full effect to this decision; that the Committee of Five, in consultation with the Standing Mediation Committee, shall seek the assistance of the Security Council of the United Nations to make whatever sanctions are imposed effective and binding on all members of the international community in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter."

In support of the decision taken by the ECOWAS Heads of State, the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting in Jakarta in September 1992, said, inter alia, in its Final Documents:

> "if ... there are parties still frustrating the efforts to create the required climate for the holding of free and fair elections in Liberia, stringent economic sanctions as proposed by the ECOWAS Summit ... [shall] be imposed on such parties and the areas they control."

It also "appealed to the international community to support said sanctions, if and when invoked, as well as provide necessary assistance to Liberia and the Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Observer Group

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

(ECOMOG)." We expect that the Security Council of the United Nations will be equally supportive.

Consistent with the spirit of its responsibilities, the Interim Government of National Unity has taken several measures aimed at enhancing the NPFL's capacity to cooperate in the implementation of the undertakings into which it willingly entered.

We have succesfully contributed to sensitizing those countries that can prove helpful in assisting with funding for demobilizing and rehabilitating combatants. An amnesty has been offered to enhance the prospects for reconciliation. We have secured food for the NPFL to help alleviate the strains incidental to the encampment of its troops, which, to use its leader's words, are currently "living off the land". To give confidence to the NPFL with respect to the pending elections, we offered it the position of Chairman of, as well as majority seating on, the Elections Commission. This we did even though the political party that it is now forming is only one grouping to enter an election with at least six other parties.

It should be recalled that Dr. Amos Sawyer, President of the Interim Government of National Unity, will not be a candidate in these elections and that therefore the advantages of incumbency are not a factor here. Morevoer, Dr. Sawyer has announced that, in order to ensure a unified country, if Mr. Taylor would concede his forces' being encamped and disarmed, and if he would renounce his claims to a bogus presidency in the area he controls, Dr. Sawyer would resign in favour of another Liberian acceptable to both sides, who would hold the country together through the remaining months leading to elections.

We, the people of Liberia, know what we want. We want an end to the war. We want a unified country. We want free and fair elections. While we

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

concede the existence of some deep-seated problems clouded by suspicion and demanding circumspection, our difficulties are being compounded by the influence that external factors and forces wield over the NPFL. This is not to suggest that Liberians are not ultimately responsible for the havoc we have wrought on our country, but it is important for the international community to understand and appreciate the variables which tend to make peace elusive in Liberia.

The Liberian crisis was planned abroad. Many of the insurgents were trained outside the country. Those who initially provided the training, arms, and finances have tried to explain to us their motives, couched in spurious arguments of revolutionary duty to their oppressed African brothers. We must remember, too, that the insurgents crossed an internationally recognized boundary and appear still to be receiving the cooperation and support of some of our would-be brotherly peoples. We remain aware that as the NPFL advanced there was a systematic plundering of the country, with the extraction from Liberia of movable capital assets, from earth-moving equipment to power plants, from computers to automobiles, primarily by the route by which the insurgents came.

We are also cognizant of the fact that a few multinational corporations, some with investments in the country, provided material and financial assistance to the NPFL, with the intention of hastening its advance. There are others which, acting on the presumption of an imminent NPFL victory, provided similar assistance to secure concessions in natural rubber, iron ore and timber resources. We are aware that some of these foreign corporations believe they have become too involved to disengage now, and they have sought the support or acquiescence of their countries in what is transpiring in Liberia.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

We Liberians are concerned about the causes underpinning our present dilemma. We do not wish to see our country go the way many small countries have gone by being embroiled in a protracted civil conflict over the spoils of war. Liberia need not be destroyed in a quest for economic advantages. There is no reason for the pitting of Liberians against each other in a zero-sum game and the transformation of the country into a mass grave.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

We recognize that we live in an interdepedent world and accept the fact that economic ends or objectives will be pursued in our country. However, we are dismayed by the senselessness of the manner and the means. Results which can be achieved in an organized, civilized and equitable way need not be pursued in a manner replete with disorder, carnage and confusion.

As we Liberians want to reconstruct our lives - the future being all we have left - we affirm here and now that all the signs of good neighbourliness we are already demonstrating are sincere and genuine and that they will continue to be a sustained national policy. In the same vein, corporate entities that were lured into errors of judgement will be expected to participate in time in open-minded discussions with the intent that they should become actual partners in progress with the people of Liberia.

The intransigence and negative attitude of the NPFL has led to the emergence on the scene of a fourth force, the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), which has declared itself to be a group of Liberian refugees trying to find their way home. They also claim that their primary objective is to compel the NPFL to adhere to the Yamoussoukro accord. The ULIMO has engaged NPFL forces and recently, in a rapid advance, captured several areas that had been under NPFL control.

We, the Interim Government, will continue our efforts to have a cease-fire arranged between these contending forces. There is an urgent need to avoid escalation through the likely involvement of the other forces, which have been encamped for more than a year, awaiting the encampment of the NPFL for the commencement of general disarmament.

Under cover of the security blanket provided by ECOMOG, the Interim Government of National Unity has succeeded in re-establishing an acceptable

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

level of civil administration. We are pleased to note that since last year schools have been open, with banking, mercantile and other commercial activities resumed. Residents are being provided with basic social services within the limits of our resources. We wish to observe that, despite the emergency situation, we have been able to operate under the rule of law with a constitutional Government which respects human rights. We take pride in the fact that the people of Liberia have demonstrated both a spirit of cooperation and the tenacity and the will to reorder their lives, in spite of tremendous hardship.

Monrovia, which had a pre-war population of less than 500,000, has grown to about 1.2 million as hundreds of thousands of our citizens continue to seek refuge in the relative safety and normalcy of the capital. This mass migration is placing a serious strain on the Government's meagre resources, taking into account that the principal sources of revenue are under NPFL control. As such, there is still a need for continued humanitarian assistance to the country.

Concurrent with the effort to bring peace to Liberia and secure appropriate conditions for holding free and fair elections, Liberia and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have invited the United Nations to assist with the electoral process. The Secretary-General has already sent consultants to Liberia to evaluate the availability of population data and the situation of constituency maps, and to provide support to the Elections Commission.

We wish to register our appreciation to the States Members of the United Nations for the several resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in response to the critical humanitarian and other needs of Liberia since the

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

civil strife began. We wish to thank all the countries, especially the United States, Japan, the European Community, the Nordic countries and others, which have made significant contributions in response to the appeals of the Secretary-General both for the United Nations emergency programme in Liberia and for assistance to the neighbouring countries which host Liberian refugees.

We also express our gratitude to the United Nations system, and to all the non-governmental and private volunteer organizations which have continued to provide assistance to our people. We trust we can rely on the international community for its continued empathy and support as Liberia goes through the most difficult period of its history.

The timely initiative of the Economic Community of West African States to mediate in the Liberian conflict was a laudable response by a subregion to a subregional problem, consistent with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. This initiative is most deserving of the encouragement and support of the international community. We therefore call on the United Nations to play an active role in mobilizing financial and other support for ECOWAS as it responds to the Liberian crisis, which continues to pose a threat to regional peace and security.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Liberia, we wish once again to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the member States of ECOWAS, particularly the Governments and peoples of Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Mali, which are participating in ECOMOG. We thank all of them for the many sacrifices they are making to restore peace to Liberia.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

While we are preoccupied with domestic considerations, we have firm views which we would like to advance with respect to some of the issues on the international agenda.

The painful and tragic situation in Somalia is a grim reminder to the people of Liberia of the ethnic strife, the wanton destruction of life and property, the grave refugee problem and the disintegration of the country that we ourselves experienced. The appalling human condition of the Somali people makes them deserving of treatment equal to, if not greater than, that given any other country experiencing a civil conflict. That is why we are most pleased with the recent initiative taken by the Secretary-General in arousing the conscience of the international community to the plight of Somalia. We also applaud the active role he is playing to resolve the conflict.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

With respect to developments in South Africa, the Government of Liberia views with serious concern the gruesome sectarian violence in that country. In view of the positive steps that the South African Government, yielding to international pressure, was taking to end apartheid, it is most distressing to receive indications of that Government's apparent collusion with the appointed leaders of homelands to unleash unprovoked violence and death on defenceless civilians engaged in a legitimate exercise of protest. Such action can only put at risk the gains that have been made by all South Africans.

We therefore urge the South African authorities to take speedy action to arrest black township violence and exclude from the security apparatus those responsible for the recent atrocities. My delegation is encouraged by the reports that the leader of the African National Congress, Mr. Nelson Mandela, and President de Klerk have resumed talks on the country's political future. We appeal, however, to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of the Inkatha freedom movement to rejoin his compatriots in the negotiations for the establishment of a non-racial, democratic society.

The tragic story of Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of continuing suffering, destruction and death. It heightens profound fears that if the situation is not urgently arrested the world could find itself involved in a major effort to prevent the extinction of a national group due to the horrendous policy of "ethnic cleansing." Liberia deplores that inhumane practice and calls for enforcement action in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, Liberia welcomes the renewed efforts by the parties to the crisis and others to move the peace process forward. It is our continuing belief that only a negotiated

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

settlement within the parameters of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) can bring a just and lasting peace to that troubled region.

One of the perennial issues before the Assembly has been the need to ameliorate the poverty and underdevelopment that plague the developing countries. The mounting debt burden, the decline in commodity prices and increasing protectionism are some of the factors contributing to the economic stagnation in many developing countries. My Government is therefore concerned about the delay in concluding the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. We entertain the hope that the negotiations will be completed before the end of 1992, as envisaged.

It was in appreciation of the disturbing economic trends that I have mentioned that the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly adopted a New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Liberia calls upon the international community to support the Agenda wholeheartedly in order to grant relief to African countries.

Another important task of this session of the General Assembly is to follow up the decisions taken by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The decision by most countries to sign the Conventions on climate change and on biodiversity, as well as to adopt a comprehensive programme for sustainable development, Agenda 21, reaffirmed awareness of the fundamental relationship between development and the environment. As the Secretary-General observes in his report, Agenda 21 constitutes the centrepiece of international cooperation and coordination activities within the United Nations system for years to come. It is therefore Liberia's sincere hope that at this session the General Assembly will take appropriate measures to ensure the full implementation of the historic decision that has been reached.

(Mr. Matthews, Liberia)

The rapid pace of change and the shrinking of our planet by faster means of travel and communication have combined to make more relevant the interdependence of nations. As such, Liberia reaffirms its abiding faith in and commitment to the principles of the United Nations that have stood mankind in good stead. Like those whose vision led to the birth of the Organization at a time of great upheavals and challenges, we too must call forth the best in us to ensure that we bequeath to posterity a world safe from pockets of wars and the attendant dreadful consequences.

In pursuit of that attainable goal we must banish from our minds all forms of mistrust, suspicion, fears and prejudices which, more often than not, define our behaviour in national and international affairs. If we muster the courage and the will to face squarely the new realities of the post-cold-war era, then the chances will be enhanced of a stable international environment in which the United Nations can promote social progress and development while keeping the peace.

Mr. BRAGANCA (Sao Tome and Principe) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): On behalf of the Sao Tome and Principe delegation, I should like to congratulate the President on his unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. His election is unquestionably a tribute to his country and a recognition of his qualities as a diplomat.

May I take this opportunity to express our appreciation of the efficient manner in which his predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi, presided over the work of the forty-sixth session.

We should like to again express our confidence in and admiration for the leadership shown by the Secretary-General Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

dealing with the challenges facing the Organization in this crucial phase of its history.

We extend our greetings to the new Members of the Organization. Their admission is a confirmation of the universalist calling of the United Nations at a time when its actions are making themselves felt everywhere in the world.

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

The end of the cold war has made it possible to foresee a new era in international relations, characterized by respect for international law and for the principles inscribed in Charter of the United Nations, and by a search for solutions to the great and complex problems that are on the agenda of the human community.

Our hopes for a better world, held hostage for so long by the reductive Manicheism of the East-West conflict, have taken form and are reflected in a common desire to create a new world order based on respect for the legitimate rights of peoples, on lasting peace, on a more balanced distribution of world resources, and on active solidarity between the rich and poor peoples of our planet, with the United Nations as a focal point and point of reference.

While it is absolutely clear today that important steps are being taken towards making some of these aspirations a reality, it is no less certain that the definition of priorities, the selection of means, the allocation of the necessary resources and, in some cases, the very solutions chosen all reflect conditionalities born of the old order and bespeak a selective approach that does not always match the noble purposes and principles that inspire the United Nations Charter. While it is not realistic to expect an immediate solution to such complex and difficult problems as those that result from the profound imbalance we find between North and South, the absence of any concrete and serious movement in this direction continues to be a concern.

That millions of men, women and children are living in circumstances that are a denial of their human condition is not admissible in this century, which has been witness to so many of man's conquests.

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

That entire peoples should also find their fundamental rights denied by the forces of occupying regimes, in flagrant violation of Security Council decisions, is clearly anachronistic, especially when the United Nations has, in some cases, already mobilized the collective will of its Members and the mechanisms provided for in its Charter to impose respect for international law. That liberation from the oppressor's yoke, which keeps entire nations subjugated, is giving rise to acts of truly suicidal barbarism in various parts of the world is a challenge to which we must respond with the greatest urgency and determination. That the future of the coming generations on this planet is being menaced by the irresponsible and blind exploitation of limited resources in the name of short-term interests reveals an individualism that cannot leave us indifferent.

For this reason, we would like to associate the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe with those who, from this very rostrum, have condemned the violence that threatens the initiatives aimed at seeking a peaceful and negotiated solution in South Africa, within the context of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, the path chosen for a peaceful transition to power for the black majority.

For this reason too we salute the Angolan people for the maturity it has demonstrated throughout the recent electoral process, which will permit the Republic of Angola to dedicate itself, in an atmosphere of peace and national reconciliation, to the tremendous task of rebuilding the country.

We cannot but regret that last-minute problems have prevented the scheduled signature of the cease-fire agreements between the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO. We would like to express our solidarity with the peoples of Mozambique and our encouragement to the parties involved to

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

persevere on the path of a peaceful solution with all the seriousness and commitment that the situation demands.

We are following the Middle East negotiations with great anticipation, hoping that they will lead to the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and a solution to the territorial conflicts that separate the peoples of the region, in compliance with the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council. We hope, likewise, that the self-determination referendum in Western Sahara will permit the people of that territory to decide their own destiny.

It is for this reason, too, that we lament the fact that the people of East Timor have had their voice silenced and that the massacres of which they are the victims are not sufficient evidence that their legitimate right to self-determination has been repressed by the force of an occupation that is on all counts contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We would like to believe that the recent meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Portugal, the administering Power, and Indonesia, under the auspices of the Secretary General, will lead to a serious process of negotiation aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the question that will end the suffering of the people of East Timor. In our view, it is essential that at the appropriate time representatives of the people of East Timor be involved in the negotiating process.

At the same time, we cannot fail to repudiate and vigourously condemn those responsible for the gratuitous suffering and human misery imposed on the peoples of Somalia, Liberia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that any reluctance to implement the decisions of the Rio de Janeiro Summit will, over time, compromise our common destiny.

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

Today more than ever before, the United Nations as an organization has a role of fundamental importance to play in defining the new world order that is being built, assuming responsibility, in the spirit of the Charter and with the participation of all its Members, for translating our collective aspirations into joint undertakings that will mobilize our energies and resources and optimize the potential contributions of each individual Member State. Thus, our admiration and encouragement go out to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the efforts he is making to restructure the Secretariat and for the initiatives he is pressing in various areas of the Organization's activities.

We believe it is essential that the decision-making process within our Organization be in keeping with the democratic principles so dear to us, and that the organs and mechanisms for the promotion of economic and social development be upgraded in order to permit a more effective response to the major challenges that humanity faces as this century nears its end.

The dynamism, breadth and consensus that inspire the activities of the Organization in the areas of conflict prevention and peace-keeping must lead us to pay special attention to the effort to restructure the economic and social sector in order to maximize the effectiveness of the intervention of the various agencies of the system - an effort already under way, as we have been informed in the Secretary-General's report.

The establishment of a new, more just and more lasting world order would appear to presuppose and assume at the national level a two-fold, fundamental challenge of our times: democratization and development.

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

Over and above selecting the model most suited to the historical and socio-cultural realities of each country, it is quite clear today that the establishment of institutions that favour the participation of the people in the management of public affairs and respect for basic human rights, including the free and regular choice of leaders, is today a condition for any lasting development. It is also evident that, in view of the high level of dependence of the so-called third-world countries on the outside world, no development will be possible unless we see a change in the unequal terms of exchange that condemn the gigantic effort of many peoples to the caprices of a free market in which decisions are taken totally without their consent.

Powerless victims of the imponderables of the world economy, in which they play but a marginal role, the nations of the third world will never be in a position to meet the development challenge unless fairer and more appropriate mechanisms are introduced in international economic relations to alter the terms of the involvement of those nations in the process of world exchanges. For a growing group of these countries - the least developed countries - international solidarity must be mobilized through cooperation more attuned to their requirements and better suited to the specific needs of each one.

We in Sao Tome and Principe are prepared and determined to meet this twofold challenge. Faced with the need to move beyond the state of lethargy in which our country found itself, political forces in Sao Tome turned to the path of transformation that led to the establishment of a democratic State through a process in which the dominant notes are dialogue, tolerance, the achievement of consensus and respect for diversity of viewpoints.

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

The political aspect of this endeavour found fertile ground, for the reasons I mentioned earlier and because it corresponded to the aspiration of the people to a future in which their fundamental rights and guarantees will be duly safeguarded. I must note, however, that major constraints of an economic and financial nature, the precipitous drop in the standard of living, and an inability to see light at the end of the tunnel of our deep concerns will surely pose a threat to the new democratic regime, with the whole array of consequences this could have.

The dilemma posed by a crisis that is unbearable on all counts and by the implementation of democratic principles demonstrates clearly that the insistent calls for the democratization of developing countries will never go beyond a mere Utopian dream unless they are backed by a new international vision open to a realistic solution of the debt problem, to a favourable change in the terms of trade and to a gradual transfer of technology to the raw-material-producing countries, thus giving them the ability to transform themselves to their own profit.

There are few moments in the common history of mankind when, as in our own time, the political, economic, defence and security architecture of the planet undergoes profound and significant changes. The diversity, the complexity and, not unexpectedly, the unpredictability of these changes represent an opportunity that must not be lost to make decisions towards correcting the assymetries and injustices forged by an order which is gradually disintegrating before our eyes. For we are all aware of the non-viability of a world whose contrasts shock and whose profound inequalitles constitute unequivocal factors of instability and revolt.

(Mr. Bragança, Sao Tome and Principe)

We therefore believe that only an international effort of intelligent convergence will permit responses that can satisfy the legitimate interests of peoples all over the world: a task in which the United Nations should play a key role, a role it is already demonstrating it can assume through intervention that is increasingly prestigious because it is incisive and pragmatic, covering the most varied regions of the world.

Despite the re-emergence of political, religious and ethnic intolerance that all too often degenerates into more extended areas of instability, and despite the persistence of major symptoms of inequality in cooperation among nations - and the consequent inequality in the living conditions of the peoples concerned - it is fair to state that we have taken a giant step forward. The more skeptical among us will say that one step is not much on the long road ahead of us, but we retain the hope that, together, freed of exacerbated and futile self-centredness, we will be capable of progressing along the arduous path to which we are irrevocably committed.

The immediate tomorrows may not hear a lot of song, but the future belongs to the world.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.